DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 400 459 CE 072 847

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TITLE Development of an Updated Strategic Marketing Plan for Fox Valley Technical College.
PUB DATE Sep 96
NOTE 61p.; Doctor of Education Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Planning; Institutional Advancement; *Marketing; Program Development; Public Relations; *Strategic Planning; *Technical Institutes; *Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS *Fox Valley Technical College WI

ABSTRACT

This project was conducted to develop a comprehensive strategic marketing plan for Fox Valley Technical College (FVTC). Components included a review of the literature, establishing criteria for the plan, validation of the criteria, the actual development of the plan involving a formative committee, and the review of institutional marketing plans from other colleges. A draft of the plan document was developed, a summative committee was used to review and evaluate the product, and the final draft was developed based on the summative committee feedback. The review of the literature validated the need for FVTC to develop a strategic marketing plan. The following criteria were established for an effective marketing plan. It must: (1) be based on and consistent with the organization's mission and strategic directions; (2) have a basis in market research and institutional data; (3) include key components of situation analysis, identification of target markets, marketing goals and objectives, marketing strategies, and evaluation; (4) serve as a internal communication tool that establishes a marketing philosophy and direction for the institution; (5) provide a comprehensive picture of the marketing strategies, as well as ongoing marketing activities, in support of the marketing goals and objectives; and (6) reflect ongoing organizational planning efforts. The study concluded that the plan would serve as a comprehensive marketing direction for FVTC; it would ensure the alignment of the marketing objectives with instructional programming priorities, and provide a framework for the ongoing evaluative measurement of the marketing objectives and strategies. (Appendixes include the following: a list of the reviews of other institutional marketing plans, strategic marketing plan criteria, validators, a list of formative committee members, the strategic marketing plan development framework, summative committee review form, and a list of members of the summative committee.) Contains 40 references. (KC)

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DEVELOPMENT OF AN UPDATED STRATEGIC MARKETING PLAN FOR FOX VALLEY TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Emergence of Vocational, Technical and Occupational Education in America

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Fox Valley Technical College

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A practicum report presented to Programs for Higher Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

Nova Southeastern University

September, 1996

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Abstract of a practicum report presented to Nova Southeastern University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education

DEVELOPMENT OF AN UPDATED STRATEGIC MARKETING PLAN FOR FOX VALLEY TECHNICAL COLLEGE

by
Susan A. May
September, 1996

The problem addressed in this study was that Fox Valley Technical College (FVTC) did not have a comprehensive, up-to-date strategic marketing plan. The purpose of the study was to develop a comprehensive and current strategic marketing plan. The research question was, "What are the appropriate and valid components of a strategic marketing plan for a two-year technical college, specifically, FVTC?"

The procedures for this study involved a review of the literature, establishing criteria for the plan, validation of the criteria, the actual development of the plan involving a formative committee, and the review of institutional marketing plans from other colleges. A draft of the plan document was developed, a summative committee was used to review and evaluate the product, and the final draft was developed based on the summative committee feedback.

The review of literature validated the need for FVTC to develop a strategic marketing plan. Six criteria were developed as the framework for an effective marketing plan, including the identification of the key components of such a plan. The formative committee directed the development of the plan and the overall

marketing objectives. A draft of the plan was written and finalized after review by the summative committee.

The study concluded that the plan would serve as a comprehensive marketing direction for FVTC, ensured the alignment of the marketing objectives with instructional programming priorities, and provided a framework for the on-going evaluative measurement of the marketing objectives and strategies. It was recommended that the strategic marketing plan be implemented, that appropriate distribution of the plan occur, that on-going evaluation of results be conducted, and that further evaluative research be done on the overall effectiveness of the plan.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Fox Valley Technical College (FVTC) is one of Wisconsin's 16 technical colleges within the Wisconsin Technical College System and serves a five county area with a district population base of approximately 400,000. The college's main campus is located in Appleton, Wisconsin with a branch campus in Oshkosh and regional center facilities in Chilton, Clintonville, Neenah, Waupaca, and Wautoma.

The mission of FVTC is "to help individuals reach their potential by providing cost-effective education and training for employment. We seek to build and maintain an effective and diverse workforce that supports the economic growth and stability of our communities" (Fox Valley Technical College Self-Study, 1995, p. 20). In fulfillment of this mission, the college offers over 60 associate of applied science degree and technical diploma programs, as well as a number of certificates, apprenticeship programs, and basic skills programming. Additionally, a wide variety of continuing education programming is delivered, including extensive contract training and technical assistance for business, industry, and government. Through the occupational areas of business, health, service, and industrial technology, as well as general education, FVTC serves approximately 43,000 individuals and 4,400 FTE (full time equivalency) in student enrollment each year. FVTC is accredited as an institution of higher education by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA).

Nature of the Problem

Fox Valley Technical College (FVTC) developed its first comprehensive institutional marketing plan in 1991, with minor updates made to this plan on an annual basis thereafter. The marketing plan defined the objectives and strategies which have guided the marketing initiatives of the college over the past four years. The plan was developed internally with very little research used as a basis for the

plan's design and content. Although it was a major effort and accomplishment for the organization and had served the institution quite well in its time, it was now out-of-date.

At a time of declining enrollments, expansion of the college's product and service mix, and tightening revenue sources, the college needed to have in place a comprehensive, aggressive, and dynamic marketing strategy. Having a sound, well-planned, research-based marketing strategy for the college would have the potential to increase enrollment, improve internal and external communications, and enhance the overall image of FVTC in the community. The development of a strategic marketing plan could also potentially serve as both a process model and product model for other post-secondary educational institutions in addressing their institutional advancement initiatives.

The problem was that the college did not have a comprehensive, up-to-date strategic marketing plan. The institutional mission, purposes, values, and vision were recently revisited and significantly revised as a result of an extensive strategic planning process, and served as an important foundation for the development of an updated marketing plan.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to develop a comprehensive, current strategic marketing plan for Fox Valley Technical College. The plan was to be multi-year in nature and address overall objectives and strategies.

Significance to the Institution

The ability of Fox Valley Technical College to grow through increased enrollment in the next several years is critical to its long term financial stability and overall impact in the district that it serves. A comprehensive strategic marketing plan would provide the framework for marketing FVTC's programs and services

and reaching its target markets within the community, enabling the institution to fulfill its service mission.

Relationship to Seminar

This practicum related to the Emergence of Vocational, Technical, and Occupational Education (VTOE) in America seminar which included a review of the history of vocational, technical, and occupational education. Part of that history involved the basis for the stereotypes and image issues that continue to exist in VTOE to this day. To combat the inherent image problem and convey the message of relevance and value in VTOE, institutional marketing plans and strategies are critical to VTOE organizations' survival in the marketplace.

Research Question

The research question that was addressed in this study was, "What are the appropriate and valid components of a strategic marketing plan for a two-year technical college, specifically, Fox Valley Technical College?"

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this practicum, the following terms needed clarification.

Advertising. Advertising consists of paid, nonpersonal communication through various media by business firms, nonprofit organizations, and individuals who are identified in the advertising message and hope to inform or persuade members of a particular audience (Boone & Kurtz, 1992, p. 532).

Market research. This refers to the systematic design, collection, analysis, and reporting of data and findings relevant to a specific marketing situation or problem facing an organization. In short, it involves finding specific answers to specific questions. This information is used to refine the marketing goals and to help develop the overall marketing plan (Sevier, 1989, p. 395).

Marketing. Marketing is a coordinated program of researching perceptions and needs of target audiences; developing products, programs, and services; and

using communications methods to inform and serve those audiences (Florida State Department of Education, 1994, p. 2).

Marketing mix. This is comprised of product, pricing, place (distribution), and promotion.

Personal selling. This is an interpersonal influence process involving a seller's promotional presentation conducted on a person-to-person basis with the prospective buyer (Boone & Kurtz, 1992, p. 532).

Promotional mix. This consists of a blending of personal selling and nonpersonal selling (including advertising, sales promotion, and public relations) by marketers in an attempt to achieve promotional objectives (Boone & Kurtz, 1992, p. 532).

Public relations. This involves a firm's communications and relationships with its various publics (Boone & Kurtz, 1992, p. 533).

Publicity. Publicity is the stimulation of demand for a good, service, place, idea, person, or organization by disseminating commercially significant news or obtaining favorable media presentation not paid for by the sponsor (Boone & Kurtz, 1992, p. 543).

Sales promotion. This involves marketing activities other than personal selling, advertising, and publicity that stimulate consumer purchasing and dealer effectiveness; includes displays, trade shows, coupons, premiums, contests, product demonstrations, and various nonrecurrent selling efforts (Boone & Kurtz, 1992, p. 533).

Strategic. This term generally refers to a plan that pertains to or is marked by specific strategies of some sort.

Target market. A target market refers to a body of existing or potential buyers of specific products or services on which an institution chooses to focus its marketing strategies.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This review of literature provides a comprehensive look at marketing and marketing plans as they relate to post-secondary education. In the first section of the review, consideration is given to what constitutes a marketing orientation, the comprehensive nature of marketing and its role for all staff, and the marketing challenges of service organizations. The next major section focuses on the key elements of an effective marketing plan, providing detailed information on the six key elements identified. The final section of the review addresses the concept of market research as a fundamental basis for sound marketing strategies.

A Marketing Orientation

The year 2000 marks the end of one century and the beginning of another. The decade of the 1990s offers community colleges a major challenge--and opportunity--to really become marketing-oriented. Marketing, done properly, is seen as being complementary and critical to the success of the community colleges' mission (Johnson, 1990, p. 1).

"To market their institutions effectively, college advancement professionals need to understand that marketing encompasses several specific activities and begins with the customer's needs, not the institution's" (Hall, 1993, p. 30). Hockenberger (1988) suggests that "a marketing plan considering societal demands take into account consumer needs, desires, and long-term interests, and the needs of a society at large. Educational institutions must remain responsive to the needs and preferences of students, while preserving academic ideals, reputation, and other goals and commitments" (p. 10).

An organization has a marketing orientation if it "responds appropriately to the needs of its various constituencies with respect to product development, price, communications, and channels of distribution." A community college that has a

marketing orientation "tries to gather information about the needs of its constituencies, acts to meet those needs, communicates effectively with the public, and constantly evaluates its programs and services in order to better serve customer needs" (Wilcox & Gorski, 1989, p. 76). Topor (1988) provided additional support for this customer orientation by stating that "an organization with a good marketing program will never forget the importance of its 'customers.' For marketing is the process that examines both sides of the exchange illustrated in Figure 1, not just the organization's" (p. 9).

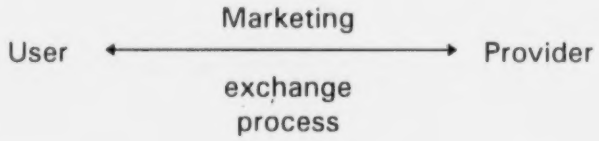

Figure 1. Marketing as an exchange process.

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education's projections (as cited in Paulsen, 1990, p. 1) "clearly indicated that the traditional college student cohort of 18 to 21 year olds would fall by 25% between the late 1970s and the early 1990s." Kelly (1988) also refers to this demographic shift of the college student population.

> Colleges must first become aware of the changes in the age and characteristics of the college student population, and then address these changes through a strong marketing effort aimed at the adult students. This is not to say that colleges should stop recruiting high school students. But rather, colleges must add to their recruitment efforts through an organized, comprehensive marketing plan which is aimed at the potential adult students. Through a comprehensive, ongoing marketing program everybody wins: adults become aware of college programs which meet their needs; and colleges increase enrollment and revenue. (p. 1)

Potential college students have become consumers and are flexing their newfound marketplace muscle. Faced with prospects of reduced enrollments, budget deficits, retrenchment, and institutional closings, many administrators have paid more attention to enrollment maintenance, have become more responsive to market interests and more aware of the increasingly competitive nature of student recruitment, and began to engage in market-oriented activities intended to attract students (Paulsen, 1990, p. 1).

"Marketing, defined in its simplest form as finding a need and filling it, is something done in all institutions" (Golden, 1993, p. 95). According to Kotler and Fox (1985), a marketing orientation indicates that "the main task of the institution is to determine the needs and wants of target markets and to satisfy these through the design, communication, pricing and delivery of appropriate and competitively viable programs and services" (p.10). Paulsen (1990) supports this by saying that "each college must work hard to find appropriate matches between the characteristics of the students it seeks to recruit and the characteristics of the institution, and to be included in the choices of such students" (p. 3). Additionally, Hall (1993) recommends that "the administrator must know the institution thoroughly before developing a marketing plan and be able to develop and adapt marketing strategies to respond to change" (p. 30).

With regard to the marketing of vocational-technical education, Aring (1993) states the following:

> In the United States, vocational is a dirty word with negative connotations that are deeply imbedded in language and culture. Unlike the Germans, who consider all education vocational because it leads to an occupation, Americans tend to associate "vocational education" with narrow training for marginal students and to think of it as preparation for manual, low-status work, or at best, work in the blue-collar trades. (pp. 396-397)

O'Connor (1988) suggests that post-secondary vocational education should be aggressively marketed given its expanding mission and that marketing can address the issues of image, enrollment, and program quality. Naylor (1987) recommends the following "principles of sound marketing: (a) research the market, (b) be visible, (c) be thorough, (d) be aggressive, (e) meet the competition head on, and (f) practice the fundamentals of good marketing" (p. 2).

Naylor (1987) also conveys that negative attitudes toward vocational education on the part of secondary sending school personnel is a major difficulty in recruiting students and states that "circumstances are forcing vocational educators to devise ways of marketing their programs, if only to defend themselves against misinformation and attempts to keep potentially willing enrollees from entering a vocational program" (p. 1). The work of the Portland Area Vocational-Technical Education Consortium (1990) suggests that strengthening the partnerships between community colleges and their local high schools and providing high quality articulated vocational-technical programs would be more important in attracting students and meeting the needs of employers in the future (p. 1).

In a business and industry survey conducted by the Montana State Council and Vocational Education (1993), respondents noted that vocational-technical education programs are stereotyped as less desirable paths to careers and frequently mentioned the need for marketing vocational education programs. Recommendations from this survey included increasing communication about vocational education programs, providing real-world work experience for vocational students, changing the curriculum to meet current needs, and marketing vocational-technical education (p. 1).

Pappas and Shaink (1994) define image as "the sum of all perceptions and expectations that people in the community have of the college. The image is an

opinion, based in part on what these individuals see or know about your college and other similar colleges" (p. 8). Sevier (1989) states, ". . . perhaps most significantly, these perceptions may or may not be true. But because these perceptions dictate whether people will respond to your messages, it is extremely important that a college understand how it is being perceived by the audiences that it needs most" (p. 395).

Despite the numbers of people served across the country in two-year community and technical colleges, the image of these institutions remains unclear to much of the nation's populace. Trustees, leaders, and staff have an obligation to ensure that the mission and contributions of these colleges are better understood by the communities they serve (Simone, 1993, p. 9). Sevier (1994) contends that "smart, aggressive, well-administered institutions do not leave their images to chance" (p. 74) and goes on to suggest the following:

> Image management begins by accepting the fact that an institution's most significant asset is its image. Image management recognizes that an institution's image must be continually built and maintained--when people hear your institution's name, they immediately should have a clear idea about who and what you are. (p. 64)

Marketing as a Comprehensive Process

"Marketing is a process, not a one-time, isolated activity. Marketing is a continuum of efforts--researched, planned, executed, and evaluated to achieve organizational goals and objectives. Marketing occurs over time; it is cyclical" (Topor, 1988, p. 7). O'Connor (1988) states that "marketing involves much more than image development and public relations. Substantive modifications need to be made in programs, support services, delivery methods, and administration" (p. 13).

"As a discipline, marketing requires us to organize our college resources in a systematic way, so all the elements and individuals necessary to marketing can

interact and create an attitude and culture in which to thrive" (Golden, 1991, p. 36). Cuyahoga Community College in Ohio (Golden, 1991) developed a model of the marketing cycle (see Figure 2) as the basis for its marketing approach.

> Graphically represented as a circle, the process is ongoing, with the student at the center. Marketing is 'everyone's business' and involves market research; the product itself--curriculum and services, which includes what we offer, when, where, and how we offer it; marketing communications or promotion (often perceived as the only part of marketing); sales or personal contact; and evaluation. (p. 36)

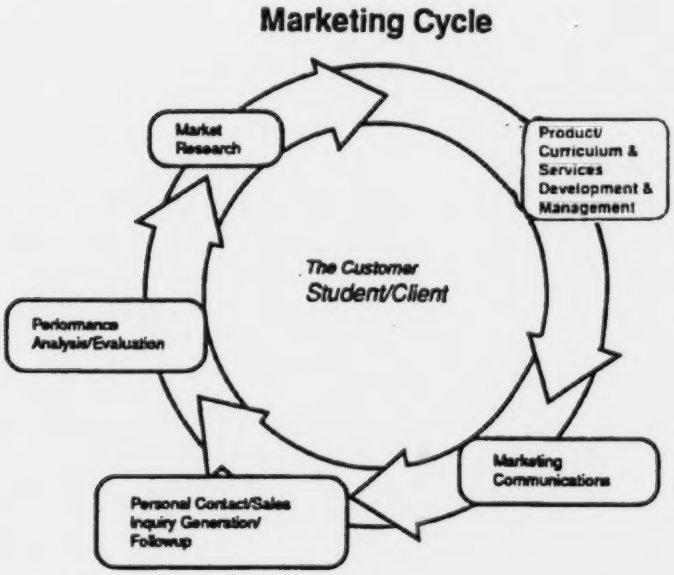

Figure 2. Model of the marketing cycle.

Pappas and Shaink (1994) describe the "marketing mix" which is composed of the four P's of marketing: product, place, price, and promotion. For a college, product consists of courses, programs, and services; place involves distribution

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channels, locations, facilities, and scheduling; price includes things such as tuition, fees, financial aid, and billing processes; promotion encompasses advertising, publications, publicity, staff contacts, personal selling, promotional displays, direct mail, telemarketing, etc. The order to which the "marketing mix" should be examined and applied is very important and should be that of product, place, price, and promotion (p.7).

Boone and Kurtz (1992) specify that the "promotional mix" is a subset of the overall marketing mix of product, pricing, promotion, and distribution elements (p. 532). "Too often, when confronted with a marketing challenge, we jump immediately to promotional solutions, disregarding the first three P's" (Pappas & Shaink, 1994, p. 7). Johnson (1990) supports this by stating that:

> Promotion, the fourth "P", can only be effective when product, place, and price are understood. When product, place, and price are combined with ongoing internal and external research, then effective promotion can begin. In too many circumstances, promotion, public relations, and advertising are seen as marketing. All are important, but only when they are the result of product, place, price, and research. (p. 2)

A Role For All Staff in the Marketing Process

Pappas and Shaink (1994) indicate that the marketing process requires the input, involvement, collaboration, and coordination of all college staff and departments.

> Every department within the college has responsibility for some aspect of the "marketing mix." Many colleges use a limited interpretation of the term "marketing" and assume that college promotion, public relations, and advertising efforts are the sole responsibility of the "marketing" department. It is imperative to broaden the perspective of marketing to include a number of image building and enrollment growth efforts. (pp. 7-8)

Golden (1993) indicates that done most effectively and viewed in its broadest approach, marketing by definition will cut across lines and involve individuals from a number of areas (p. 95). Boone and Kurtz (1992) also address the organizational

scope of marketing and state that "the 'marketing concept' is a companywide consumer orientation with the objective of achieving long-run success. All facets of the organization must be involved with first assessing and then satisfying customer wants and needs. The effort is not something to be left only to the marketers" (p. 11).

To be successful at producing results, the marketing mandate must come from the highest levels of the organization. The board of trustees must keenly understand the importance of institutional image in relationship to the communities it serves. The president chooses the college's pathway toward fulfilling its mission and mobilizes staff toward effectiveness and a positive public image. Faculty members are critically important to marketing specific academic programs. All college staff should understand that they represent the college as they interact with students and the community-at-large. Individual staff members encountered by students and prospective students, alumni or donors are the personification of the college and greatly influence the perceived image. Students and alumni are perhaps the best marketing resource of the college in the form of ambassadors, peer mentors, and testimonials based on strong feelings about the benefits they received. Community leaders can reaffirm the positive relationship the college has with business and industry and are valuable image amplifiers (Williams, 1993, pp. 73-74).

Bennett (1991) looked at reaching prospective students for vocational training and contends that the basic premise centers around alerting, encouraging, and assisting the students through the process. A team effort is promoted where each staff member must be part of the recruitment team (p. 1). The Florida State Department of Education's Tallahassee Division of Applied Technology and Adult Education (1994) developed a training workshop for vocational, adult, and

community educators focusing on the marketing of their educational programs and the critical importance of marketing occurring at the "grassroots" level (p. 1).

Williams (1993) describes the role that marketing also must play in the research and development of educational products:

> Marketing must include a recognition of the needs of present and future students, as well as community and business needs. It should be integral to the development of an educational product to meet those needs. This responsibility includes recommendations on curriculum development and scheduling options that respond to previously identified market needs. Essential to successful image enhancement and public trust are providing courses and packaging delivery timeframes that people want to buy. The best marketing advice is to ask the customer how to improve the product, even educational programming. (p. 78)

Topor (1988) addresses a marketing challenge that occurs as a result of how many organizations are structured and how they operate.

> A typical nonprofit organization is made up of vertical components--departments, units, or sets of activities--which, in most cases, have their own organizational structure, their own administrative leaders, functions, and, in some cases, mission. Each unit offers services to the marketplace. Although the units are organized under the umbrella of the organization, they often operate with great autonomy. In the past, when nonprofits were driven by their internal needs and did not have to pay much attention to their external markets, this autonomy presented no problem. But for a contemporary, market-sensitive, externally driven organization, the autonomous vertical-unit organization can create great difficulties. In many cases, this kind of organization does not allow quick and easy development of intradisciplinary services, nor does it encourage promotion across vertical lines. Instead, it is more likely to lead to competition of organizational subunits, often at the expense of the collective parent organization. (p. 17)

Marketing Challenges of Service Organizations

"Colleges, hospitals, hotels, and even charities are facing an increasingly competitive environment. Successful service organizations, like successful product-oriented firms, must understand how the consumer views a service and in what ways a company can present a differential advantage relative to competing offerings" (Berkowitz et al., 1992, p. 641). Albrecht and Zemke (1985) note that

companies and institutions that exist for the purpose of delivering services of varying kinds, including colleges, all have the problem of gaining and retaining the patronage of their customers (p. V). Berkowitz et al. (1992) suggest four unique elements to services, the "four I's of services":

> Services are intangible; that is, they can't be held, touched or seen before the purchase decision. A major marketing need for services is to make them tangible or show the benefits of using the service. Marketing services is challenging because the quality of a service is often inconsistent. Since services depend on the people who provide them, their quality varies with each person's capabilities and day-to-day job performance. A third difference between services and goods, related to problems of consistency, is inseparability. In most cases the consumer cannot (and does not) separate the service from the deliverer of the service or the setting in which the service occurs. For example, to receive an education, a person may attend a university. The quality of the education may be high, but if the student has difficulty parking, finds counseling services poor, or sees little opportunity for extracurricular activity, he or she may not be satisfied with the educational experience. Inventory of services is different from that of goods. With services, inventory carrying costs are more subjective and are related to idle production capacity, which is when the service provider is available but there is no demand. (pp. 635-636)

Zemke (1992) developed a comparison chart (Table 1) of what he defines as the seven most critical characteristics in distinguishing products from services (p. 39). Williams (1993) describes the nuances of educational "buying":

> The marketing of education differs from the marketing of many consumer-based products because the public does not always know what to expect after the sale. In many cases, educational marketing needs to deal with perceived needs versus the real needs of customers. The principal product of community colleges is quality education that can be applied to a career or as a step toward an advanced degree. However, the definition of what quality is and the value of the difference the product will make in the buyer's life may remain a mystery in the pre-enrollment phase of the transaction. (p. 71)

Just as the unique aspects of services necessitates changes in the consumer's purchase process, the marketing management process requires special adaptation. In services marketing the employee plays a central role in attracting, building, and maintaining relationships with customers.

Table 1

Most Critical Characteristics Distinguishing Products From Services

Products	Services
The customer owns an object.	The customer owns a memory. The experience cannot be sold or passed on to a third party.
The goal of product producing is uniformity--all widgets are alike.	The goal of service is uniqueness; each customer is "special."
A product can be put into inventory; a sample can be sent for the customer to review.	A service happens in the moment. It cannot be stockpiled.
The customer is an end user who is not involved in the production process.	The customer is a coproducer who is a partner in creating the service.
One conducts quality control by comparing output to specifications.	Customers conduct quality control by comparing expectations to experience.
If improperly produced, the product can be pulled off the line or "recalled."	If improperly performed, apologies or reparations are the only recourse.
The morale of production employees is important.	The morale of service employees is critical.

This aspect of services marketing has led to a new concept--internal marketing. Internal marketing is based on the notion that a service organization must focus on its employees, or internal market, before successful programs can be directed to customers. The internal marketing concept holds that an organization's employees (its "internal market") will be influenced to develop a market orientation if marketing-like activities are directed at them. This idea suggests that employees and employee development through recruitment, training,

communication, and administration are critical to the success of service organizations (Berkowitz et al., 1992, pp. 645-646).

"In the public's eye, colleges deliver services, not products, in the guise of teaching, learning, certificates and degrees, and student services. And when your product is a 'service,' the quality of that service is essential to a robust and healthy business" (Pappas & Shaink, 1994, p. 30). Berry and Parasuraman (1991) suggest that cutting edge services marketing is less slick and fancy, and involves more of the old-fashioned virtues such as caring and common sense. This illustrates the importance of customer-friendly service designs and that everyone performing a service is, in fact, a marketer (p. 4). This service orientation is further exemplified in Sevier's writing on institutional image (1994) where he makes the following statement:

> While most impressions are built over time, they begin with a powerful first impression or encounter, an encounter upon which all future images are built. These first impressions, called "moments of truth," are so strong and powerful that it is very difficult to change the direction of an image after a poor first impression. (p. 62)

Key Elements of a Marketing Plan

"An effective marketing plan is a kind of snapshot of where the institution has been and where it is headed. This picture gives college employees a means of measuring the success of the program and provides a practical guide for actions to market the institution." Further, planning forces those involved to "establish priorities, identify the strengths and weaknesses of the college, and allocate resources in light of the institution's goals" (Harris, 1989, p. 67).

Institutional Mission

Kotler and Fox (1985) point out that there is a direct relationship between marketing and fulfilling the institutional mission. They state that "a marketing orientation holds that the main task of the institution is to determine the needs and

wants of target markets and to satisfy them through the design . . . and delivery of . . . programs and services" (p. 10).

Topor (1988) defines a mission statement as "a written description of purpose" that can be used to research, plan, develop, execute, and monitor the organization's programs. He also suggests that a good, up-to-date mission statement can be "the yardstick against which marketing efforts are measured, the divining rod used to develop new ventures, and a balance against which to weigh new programs" (p. 21). Boone and Kurtz (1992) recommend that "defining the mission of the organization" constitute step one of the marketing planning process (p. 122).

This literature review examined six models of marketing plans and their key elements, steps or components as developed by Berkowitz et al. (1992), Boone and Kurtz (1992), Golden (1995), Harris (1989), Heibing and Cooper (1992), and Vivelo (1990). There is a high level of consistency within this work and the common elements of these planning models follow.

Situation Analysis

All of the models researched, (Berkowitz et al., 1992; Boone and Kurtz, 1992; Golden, 1995; Vivelo, 1990), include a situation analysis as the first step in the marketing planning process, however Heibing and Cooper (1992) refer to this step as a "business review" (p. 1) and Harris (1989) suggests "reviewing the mission" and "reviewing available research" as the initial steps in the plan development (p. 68). Berkowitz et al. (1992) define situation analysis as "taking stock of where you have been, where you are now and where you are headed given current plans. It requires that you assess the current strengths and weaknesses and the market in which you compete" (p. 41). Vivelo (1990) suggests that a situational analysis be done of factors affecting the overall market, the customer or client, the college, the products and services, and the competition

(p. 4). Golden (1995) recommends that the target audience be defined as part of the situational analysis (p. 36) and Boone and Kurtz (1992) suggest that identifying customers, market segments, and their buying habits are part of the situation analysis (p. 147).

For community colleges, market shares are generally developed for high schools and key geographic and demographic breakouts of the college's service area. High school market share looks at the percentage of a high school's graduates who enroll at the college. This analysis should be conducted over time, e.g. one- and three-year intervals, as well as by comparing the market shares from specific high schools to the college's average market share from the schools. Geographic market share analysis is based on some geographic segment relevant to a particular college, e.g. county, city, zip code, etc., for which there is both census data and college data available. This market share data is also expressed as a percentage. A comprehensive enrollment analysis should also focus on those segments over which college marketing efforts might have influence, including gender, ethnicity, age, and educational achievement. This data should be monitored in a year to year comparison to spot trends (Fonte, 1994, pp. 43-45).

Identify Target Markets

"A target market is a group of people with a set of common characteristics. Target marketing allows for a concentration of effort against a portion of the population with similar purchasing needs and buying habits. Potential secondary target markets might be influencer markets" (Hiebing & Cooper, 1992, p. 90). Topor (1988) defines target marketing as "finding the most economical and efficient match between your organization's services and groups of users, current or potential" (p. 28).

"The marketing plan process, properly used, will create a consistent image for the college, better serve the target markets identified, and create innovative

strategies specific to the target markets' needs" (Pappas & Shaink, 1994, p. 21). Harris (1989) addresses the identification of target markets in community colleges:

> For most community colleges, target markets identified include: (a) "traditional" students (recent high school graduates); (b) potential students who have been out of high school for only a year or two; (c) re-entry men and women who are usually between the ages of 25 and 45; (d) currently employed workers seeking upgrading of skills or retraining; and (e) older adults (usually over 55). Be careful that the groups you define are not so broad as to be unworkable. In order to market specific programs and services effectively, you must find appropriate ways to segment these large groups into smaller ones. The more specific a group's definition, the more it will respond to specific marketing activities. A typical community college might include 30 or more target groups. (p. 70)

Topor (1988) indicates that once you have established your target markets, you must understand them. Understanding your target markets can help you develop better services, better delivery, better communication, and better promotion--all of which lead to better marketing. Target marketing is also more economical, as "no organization can afford to market all of its services to all of the people all of the time." Having a clear idea about the target markets you are aiming for, will help in every step of the marketing process (p. 130). Pappas and Shaink (1994) suggest that the most successful approach to developing a college marketing plan is to prioritize your target markets based on the college's annual strategic plan (p. 11). Berkowitz et al. (1992) recommend the development of a market-product grid to serve as a framework for relating the segments of a market (customers with different needs) to the products offered (p. 197).

Marketing Goals and Objectives

Williams (1993) contends that "each college must clearly identify and articulate the marketing goals it desires to accomplish and methodically move toward achieving them" (p. 76). Harris (1989) refers to setting enrollment goals as a key step in the development of a college's marketing plan. These goals should be set by getting input from all of the academic departments of the college,

as well as the administration. In addition to looking at head count or full-time equivalency, set target goals for each program, age category, gender and ethnic background, as well as for type of education, such as continuing education, education provided to business and industry, vocational education, and transfer education (p. 69).

In some instances the terms "goals" and "objectives" are used synonymously such as in Vivelo's writing (1990), which describes the step of "setting marketing and business objectives to include market share, growth, positioning, and financial performance" (p. 3). Berkowitz et al. (1992) describe a number of different marketing objectives that could be pursued to achieve a single goal:

> If the marketing goal is to increase revenues, it could be achieved through increasing market penetration (present markets; present products); through product development (present markets; new products); through market development (new markets, present products); or through diversification (new markets, new products). (p. 557)

"Marketing objectives and strategies form the foundation of the marketing plan. Marketing objectives describe what needs to be achieved in order to meet the sales goals, and marketing strategies describe how the objectives will be accomplished." A marketing objective must: (a) be specific, focusing on a singular goal, (b) be measurable, with results able to be quantified, (c) relate to a specific time period, and (d) focus on affecting target market behavior such as trial, repeat purchase, or frequency of purchase (Hiebing & Cooper, 1992, p. 100).

Marketing Strategies

This element of the marketing plan models is referred to in a variety of terminology, including "marketing program" (Berkowitz et al., 1992, p. 553), "marketing activities" (Harris, 1989, p. 70), "marketing strategies and programs" (Vivelo, 1990, p. 3), "marketing mix implementation tools" (Heibing & Cooper,

1992, p. 1), and "marketing strategies" (Boone & Kurtz, 1992, p. 122; Golden, 1995, p. 36).

Harris (1989) recommends that you conduct numerous activities that attract students to the college, that these activities constitute the bulk of the marketing plan, and that each should be aimed at a specific target group. Also important to the marketing plan are internal activities such as developing publications, facility remodeling to accommodate student registration, inservice training for recruiters, or acquiring computer technology to manage inquiries (p. 70). Harris (1989) further recommends that in developing specific marketing activities, a marketing activity chart be developed which includes activity title, target group, brief description, evaluation measure, completion date, and estimated cost (pp. 70-71). In developing marketing strategies, consideration may also need to be given to three levels of marketing as identified by Topor (1988): "(a) institutional--marketing the generic (collective, whole) organization, (b) product line--marketing groups of related services, and (c) product level--marketing specific, individual services" (p. 71).

Boone and Kurtz (1992) define promotional mix as "a blending of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and public relations to achieve marketing objectives" (p. 535). Boone and Kurtz (1992) go on to state that since quantitative measures for determining the effectiveness of each mix component in a given market segment are not available, the choice of a proper mix of promotional elements is one of the most difficult tasks facing the marketing manager. Factors affecting the promotional mix include: (a) the nature of the market, (b) the nature of the product, (c) the stage in the product life cycle, (d) price, and (e) funds available for promotion (p. 535). To further address the concept of promotion and its relationship to marketing, Topor (1988) proposes the following:

> Promotion is the "bridge" that links your organization and its services with its external target markets. Promotion is the engine that provides power to the marketing vehicle, but promotion requires marketing information to be successful. Marketing information enables you to identify what to promote, to whom to promote it, why to promote it, how to promote it, and when to promote it. Marketing, when properly done, forces you to create promotional messages that speak to the needs and wants of your target markets. (pp. 83-84)

Several of the marketing planning models incorporate the identification of budget resources and timelines for implementation for each of the marketing strategies or activities (Berkowitz et al., 1992, p. 553; Golden, 1995, p. 36; Harris, 1989, p. 71; Heibing & Cooper, 1992, p. 1). Finally, the element of evaluation is addressed as a key element of an effective marketing plan.

Evaluation

Berkowitz et al. (1992) refer to the evaluation aspect of a marketing plan as the control phase in which you measure results and make modifications to the plan (p. 553). Boone and Kurtz (1992) also support this step in the plan and refer to it as "monitoring and adapting strategies when necessary, based on feedback" (p. 122). According to Bryant (1994), "educational marketing is not just a numbers game anymore; it is all about people. You have to analyze the results you get from different types of contacts, then you have to abandon the less effective strategies in favor of the more effective approaches" (p. 11). Harris (1989) recommends that an evaluation measure be designated for each marketing activity as well as ongoing evaluation of the entire marketing plan (pp. 70-72).

"Costly mistakes can result from continuing to perform routine tasks without periodically re-thinking the purpose of each. It doesn't matter how many ads are purchased or how many brochures are printed. All that counts is what works for each college and its community" (Williams, 1993, p. 76).

To conclude this section on the key elements of a marketing plan, Berkowitz et al. (1992) present one of the more comprehensive models including the

following steps: (a) situation analysis (find where we have been and are now; project where we are headed with existing plans); (b) goal setting (identify where we want to be; segment the markets; identify alternative marketing opportunities; select target markets); (c) marketing program (how we get to where we want to be; develop the program's marketing mix, including the related budget); (d) implementation phase (execution of the marketing program); and (e) control phase (measure results and make modifications) (p. 553). Even more simply stated, Sevier (1989) suggests that a single plan that coordinates all the marketing activities of the college in its most simple (and probably most effective) form, contains three elements: first, a set of prioritized marketing goals; second, a series of activities designed to accomplish those goals; and third, strategies for evaluating the effectiveness of the marketing activities (p. 393).

Market Research

Golden (1995) states that in order to serve our clientele most effectively, we must be knowledgeable of needs and attitudes about the college and its programs. Specifically, key questions that research must help the college address are:

1. How must we change our mission and offerings to adapt to the needs of the next century?

2. What programs, courses and services should the college be bringing to the market? Or phasing out?

3. What changes are needed in the college's marketing and communications strategy to strengthen the relationship with its markets and constituencies?

4. How can each campus and off-campus site tailor their programming for maximum enrollment in quality post-secondary education?

5. What are the most strategically important demographic, competitive and attitudinal trends for the trustees, administration, and faculty in terms of setting educational program priorities (p. 7)?

"A community college cannot achieve its mission of serving the needs of the local community without effective market research" (Fonte, 1989, p. 46). Johnson (1990) states that "just as highly competitive airlines conduct market research to gain a competitive edge and attract new markets, community colleges must do the same" (p. 2). Pyke (1993) also concurs that "market research is as important in education as it is in any other industry to guide developments" (p. 99). Fonte (1994) also points out that market research focuses on the effectiveness of the college by examining factors related to enrollment trends, and customer expectations and satisfaction (p. 43). One purpose of market research is evaluation, which needs to be done continually "to ensure that the educational institution is responding to community demands" (Pyke, 1993, p. 99).

Golden (1995) indicates that one element of a successful marketing plan is that it is based on research (p. 1), and that market research should also be the basis for promotion, as she noted that the typical benefits to promote two-year colleges (based on market research) are accessibility, affordability, teaching faculty who care, smaller classes, career training, graduates who succeed, and modern campuses and equipment for up-to-date education (p. 66). Fonte (1989) distinguishes between the different types of market research used in community colleges:

> There are three levels of sophistication in market research at community colleges: (a) basic research focuses on secondary sources derived from internal college data and external data of governments, associations, universities, or other sponsoring research entities; (b) intermediate research involves a data-gathering effort that couples qualitative research activities--especially focus groups--with secondary research analysis; and (c) comprehensive research which incorporates a strong mix of quantitative survey research, primary source data, and other qualitative and secondary research. Table 2 summarizes the relationship of key market segments and the available research tools at the three levels of research. (p. 40)

Table 2

Types of Market Research

Target market	Research level	Research source	Approach
Current/recent students	Basic	Secondary data: Internal	Enrollment trend analysis
	Basic	Secondary data: Census and internal high school records	Market share analysis
	Intermediate	Primary: qualitative	Focus groups
	Comprehensive	Primary: quantitative	Student attitudes survey
Potential students · High school age · Adult · High school counselors	Intermediate	Primary: qualitative	Focus groups
	Comprehensive	Primary: quantitative	Attitude surveys Mail/phone

Summary

With the increasing competition for students in post-secondary education, augmented by the continuing social stereotypes of vocational-technical education, it becomes more imperative than ever that two-year community and technical colleges operate using the service and marketing principles of the private sector. This involves a customer needs focus identified through market research and serves as the very foundation of successful marketing planning.

Marketing involves much more than promotional activities and is, indeed, a very comprehensive process. It also involves, or needs to involve, all staff in an organization as they all have some role to play in effectively bringing services to

their customers. Marketing cannot just be a function undertaken by one department in the organization.

There is general consensus by the authors' work reviewed on the most basic and important elements of an effective marketing plan which can be applied to almost any organization, private or public, for profit or non-profit, manufacturing or service. These key elements consist of having a clear institutional mission, doing a situation analysis, identification of target markets, establishing marketing goals and objectives, developing marketing strategies, and evaluation. These elements have clear implications for the development of the strategic marketing plan for FVTC and the project criteria for this practicum.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Eight procedures were used to complete this development practicum. First, a review of the literature was conducted, including key word searches on topics such as marketing, marketing plans, institutional advancement, institutional image, student recruitment, and the developmental research process.

Second, criteria were established for the strategic marketing plan. The criteria were based on information from: (a) the literature review, (b) the review of institutional marketing plans of other two-year technical or community colleges in the United States (Appendix A), requested in writing from their marketing directors, and (c) consultation with Fox Valley Technical College's (FVTC's) manager of marketing and public relations, and director of planning, research, and development. The complete listing of criteria is included in Appendix B.

Third, the criteria established were put through a validation process, both in terms of content and face validity. To establish content validity, the criteria were reviewed by FVTC's manager of marketing and public relations, director of planning, research, and development, the college president, and the marketing director from Northcentral Technical College in Wausau, Wisconsin (Appendix C). The draft criteria were sent in writing to these individuals asking for their feedback as to whether they were reasonable and clear, if they were valid from their perspective, and if they were sufficiently inclusive.

The target audience of the strategic marketing plan will consist of the internal staff who have responsibility for implementing the strategies entailed in the plan. Therefore, the face validity of the criteria was addressed by having a group of six FVTC staff, directly involved in some aspect of marketing the college (Appendix C), review and provide input on the criteria. This group of staff were identified by the manager of marketing and public relations, and the director of planning,

research, and development and a group session was conducted in February, 1996 where the criteria were reviewed for comment and input.

The fourth step involved the actual development of the strategic marketing plan. To assist in providing feedback and assuring alignment with the criteria during the development process, a formative committee was used. The formative committee consisted of the college's manager of marketing and public relations, the director of planning, research, and development, the economic development manager/training representative, the student recruitment team leader/marketing representative, and the marketing production services team leader (Appendix D).

In developing the plan, several steps were taken: (a) the final draft of the criteria were reviewed with the formative committee at the first meeting in February, 1996, (b) a project development timeline was created and also shared with the formative committee at the first meeting, (c) a content outline for the marketing plan was developed in February, 1996 and also reviewed with the formative committee, and (d) at its initial meeting, the formative committee developed a plan for identifying and collecting the necessary information and data required for the plan. Prior to meeting, the formative committee was provided with a number of recent sources of staff and consultant input on the college's marketing and recruitment efforts, including a planning session that was conducted with all marketing and recruitment staff, feedback from an external marketing consultant agency, and documented discussions with the instructional division deans to that point.

The formative committee was expanded to include the four instructional division deans of the college, as well as the associate dean of student services for the purpose of developing the overall objectives of the strategic marketing plan. Three sessions (9 hours) of facilitated group planning were conducted with the total formative committee to focus on the overall marketing objectives of the plan,

the appropriate target markets for various programming, and to ensure alignment of the marketing plan with the operational planning of the instructional areas of the college. These planning sessions were conducted in April, 1996.

Fifth, institutional marketing plans were requested in writing from 20 other colleges from across the country. Reviewing plans from other colleges assisted in the development of the initial criteria and served as resources in creating the product for this study.

Sixth, a draft of the strategic marketing plan was developed by the vice president of marketing and economic development with continuous review and assistance of the core formative committee. All key components of the plan were completed in draft form by June, 1996.

Seventh, a summative committee was called upon to validate the strategic marketing plan by comparing the draft of the product to the established criteria through a written feedback mechanism that was developed for this purpose (see Appendix F). The summative committee included marketing directors from three other technical colleges, one private sector marketing consultant, and the college's president, manager of marketing and public relations, and director of planning, research, and development. A complete listing of the summative committee membership is found in Appendix G. The summative committee also validated the content of the product by providing written feedback on both the substance and presentation of the marketing plan. The face validity of the draft was addressed by having a sample group of staff, directly involved in some aspect of marketing the college, review and provide feedback on the plan. The sample group was the same group of FVTC staff that assisted in validating the original criteria for the project, identified in the listing of validators in Appendix C.

Eighth, revisions were made to the plan as suggested by the summative committee in August, 1996. Upon the completion of a quantity printing, the final

product will be made available to all FVTC staff and the college board of trustees in September, 1996. A copy of the product has been submitted with this practicum report under separate cover.

Although it was originally anticipated that this study and related procedures would be conducted and completed during the fall of 1995, this timeframe proved to be unrealistic given the scope of the project, the number of people involved, and the other demands on the developer's time from the institution. The procedures of the study were conducted between September, 1995 and August, 1996.

Assumptions

For this practicum, it was assumed that the individuals serving as validators of the criteria established for this product and the product, itself, would have the knowledge and expertise to guide the development of this study. It was also assumed that this study would be valid within the context of Fox Valley Technical College and that this project was a priority for development within the college.

Limitations

The product of this study was limited in that it was specific to the needs of Fox Valley Technical College, its markets, and marketing function. Another limitation was that the quality and effectiveness of the final product would depend on establishing sound criteria as the basis for the product's development and ultimate evaluation.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

The outcome of each procedural step conducted in this developmental study is described in the following paragraphs. The review of the literature (Chapter 2) included sections on a marketing orientation; marketing as a comprehensive process; a role for all staff in the marketing process; marketing challenges of service organizations; key elements of a marketing plan; and market research. The review of literature validated the need for Fox Valley Technical College (FVTC) to develop a strategic marketing plan.

Criteria were established for the strategic marketing plan by the president, manager of marketing and public relations, and director of planning, research, and development at FVTC, as well as the marketing director from Northcentral Technical College. The criteria were identified using an initial brainstorm process followed by mailings to each individual for more critical review and content refinement. The following criteria were developed:

1. The plan must be based on, and consistent with, the organization's mission and strategic directions.

2. The plan must have some basis in market research and institutional data.

3. The plan must include the following key components: situation analysis, identification of target markets, marketing goals/objectives, marketing strategies, and an evaluation component.

4. The plan must serve as an internal communication tool that is clearly written and establishes a marketing philosophy and direction for the institution.

5. The plan must provide a comprehensive picture of the marketing strategies, as well as on-going marketing activities, in support of the marketing goals/objectives identified.

6. The plan must reflect on-going organizational planning efforts of the college.

In the meeting with staff to determine the face validity of the criteria, most of the commentary confirmed the criteria as being important to an effective marketing plan and the discussion centered around how these aspects of a plan actually need to be implemented in the organization. A few recommendations were made regarding the wording and clarity of the criteria, which were incorporated into the final version.

The correspondence requesting copies of marketing plans from other colleges resulted in the receipt of four documents from the following colleges: Cuyahoga Community College (CCC), Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC), Sinclair Community College (SCC), and Western Wisconsin Technical College (WWTC). A complete listing of the institutional marketing plans reviewed is found in Appendix A.

The CCC plan was a very detailed document as a result of extensive campus-wide staff planning and involvement and included a situation analysis, objectives, overall strategies, college positioning, tactics, timetables, and flow charts (College Wide Marketing, 1990). The MATC document, Marketing, Public Relations, and Institutional Advancement, was more promotional activity oriented and included an annual calendar of these activities (Marketing, Public Relations, 1995).

The marketing plan developed by SCC (Marketing Plan 1994-95, 1994) incorporated some general information on marketing objectives, included some information describing their current situation and projected enrollments, but focused primarily on promotional activities in detail (activity, initiator, implementation date, promotional category, target, and cost). Western Wisconsin Technical College's plan provided information on the goals and functions of the College Relations Department, outlined the overall marketing strategies and target

audience, and primarily detailed an 18-month promotional plan including publications, direct marketing, video production, special events, and advertising (Marketing Plan 1993-94, 1993).

The core formative committee met a total of eight times between February and July, 1996. At the initial meeting, the formative committee reviewed the criteria for the strategic marketing plan, as well as variety of the most recent marketing planning documents of the college, and the marketing plans that were available from the four other colleges. The formative committee also created the framework for developing the marketing plan at its first meeting, including the content outline for the plan, the lead people responsible for various components of the plan, who needed to be involved in the various components, and the targeted timeline for completion of the various components. This planning framework document is presented as Appendix E. The key components of the plan included: (a) introduction, (b) situation analysis, (c) target markets of the college, (d) marketing goals/objectives, (e) marketing strategies, and (f) maintenance/on-going marketing activities.

To establish the overall marketing objectives for the plan as one of the major components, the formative committee was expanded to include the four instructional deans and the associate dean of student services. An intensive planning process was conducted over three sessions and a total of nine hours with the expanded formative committee to identify the marketing objectives needed to support the overall instructional plan of the college and ensure appropriate alignment between the products/services, target markets, and marketing strategies. The committee reviewed the initial work completed on the environmental scan, the situation analysis which focused on enrollment trends, the purposes of the college, and the recent college-wide operational planning outcomes for 1996-97. The committee also reviewed the grid of college products

for key target markets that was drafted by the vice president of marketing and economic development and prioritized the key areas of intersect that would be the focus of the marketing plan objectives to have the most impact on enrollment growth. The five overall marketing objectives that were developed by the formative committee consisted of:

1. Increase full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment in associate degree and technical diploma programs.

2. Build enrollment in certificates, packaged to address the focused needs of employers in specialized areas, as well as the marketable skills of individuals seeking employment transition.

3. Increase the college's client base and number of employees trained through economic development contract services.

4. Increase the overall enrollment of non-program students taking program courses.

5. Develop the promotional tools and media placement to support the college's on-going and overall promotional mix.

The formative committee was also involved in developing a number of specific strategies for each of the objectives, the target markets for each, the specific tactics to be implemented, the estimated cost of each strategy, and the evaluation measures. The formative committee determined that the strategic marketing plan being developed should cover a two year time span from July, 1996 through June, 1998.

Based on the work, input, and direction of the formative committee, a draft of the strategic marketing plan was written by the vice president of marketing and economic development in June, 1996 with continuous content review by the formative committee. The plan was developed to include all of the components that were identified in the initial project criteria.

The summative committee was then called upon to evaluate the draft of the strategic marketing plan against the established criteria. Evaluative feedback from the summative committee indicated that the marketing plan sufficiently met the criteria that were established, that the content of the plan was appropriate, and that the presentation and format of the document was well designed with good use of charts and graphics. There was very positive feedback on the comprehensive, yet clear, nature of the plan. One evaluator indicated that the amount of market research was "a bit weak" and also suggested the use of an executive summary. The face validity of the marketing plan was achieved by having the same group of staff who reviewed the initial criteria for the project evaluate the draft. The feedback from this group also indicated that the criteria was sufficiently met, that the content was very comprehensive, and that the presentation and format of the document was easy to follow and user friendly.

Specific comments and suggestions from the summative committee resulted in the following revisions to the marketing plan draft. Specific tactics were added to the plan involving analyzing the current program choice preferences of "traditional age" student prospects versus "adult" prospects. A market research component on the adult market to determine whether time constraint is a key variable in their decision to enroll was added. A tactic was also added to conduct an analysis of business client turnover in a given year to determine the level of replacement business that the college needs to do with this market just to stay even in contract services. At the point in time that the marketing plan was completed, the 1995-96 year end enrollment data was then available, and based upon summative committee recommendation, the data in all of the situation analysis charts on enrollment were updated to reflect the most current data. An entire marketing objective was also added involving the evaluation of the college's overall level of customer service to prospective and current students and clients.

This objective included strategies on (a) evaluation of the college's marketing communications with prospective program students, and (b) analysis of internal procedures and service practices to determine where the institution may be "turning off" the customer. Finally, by way of additions or modifications made to the plan draft, the tactics involving web page development for priority programs were changed to reflect a more aggressive timeframe. The recommendation of one summative committee member to add an executive summary was not done as the plan document already included a two page summary of objectives and strategies.

In response to the research question of this study, the appropriate and valid components of a strategic marketing plan for a two-year technical college, specifically Fox Valley Technical College, included an introduction; the college's mission, purposes, and strategic directions; an environmental scan section; an enrollment situation analysis summary; the target markets of the college shown in a matrix against the institution's key products and services; the marketing plan objectives, strategies, and tactics; and an overview of the maintenance/on-going marketing activities. The product of this study (Fox Valley Technical College's Strategic Marketing Plan for 1996-1998) was presented under separate cover.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

The literature on the marketing of post-secondary education seemed to suggest that before an effective marketing plan could be developed and implemented, an organization needed to have a marketing orientation. Colleges that attempt to understand their constituencies' needs through market research, act to meet those needs, communicate effectively to these constituencies, and constantly evaluate and modify their offerings have a marketing orientation. A marketing plan, to support an overall marketing orientation, is much more involved than a simple listing of promotional strategies if it is to be needs based and market driven.

The results of this study confirmed the need for a two-year technical college to have both a marketing orientation and a related strategic marketing plan to address the overall marketing objectives of the institution. Core components of an effective marketing plan were clearly evident in the literature, including (a) institutional mission, (b) situation analysis, (c) identification of target markets, (d) goals/objectives, (e) strategies, and (f) evaluation. The strategic marketing plan developed for Fox Valley Technical College (FVTC) was consistent with several of the more comprehensive models presented in the literature. The plan developed for FVTC was much more comprehensive in its breadth and depth than three of the four marketing plans of other colleges that were reviewed.

The criteria established for the plan were consistent with the content of the literature review and the development of the plan occurred within the framework of the project criteria. A market-product grid, as suggested in the literature, was developed as a component of this plan which consisted of a matrix of the college's key target markets and its major products (or deliverables). An additional element

included in the plan was a Gantt chart for each year that essentially provided a graphic timeline of the various marketing tactics to assist in implementation and review.

The literature also indicated that an effective marketing process requires input, involvement, coordination and collaboration from across the organization, not limited to the work of the marketing staff. Therefore, the direction for FVTC's marketing plan objectives was established in a collaborative planning process with the instructional leaders (division deans) and student services (associate dean) of the college. This planning process helped to ensure that the plan was not created in isolation, that it had strong alignment with the direction of instructional programming, and that there was consensus at the leadership levels of instructional services, institutional marketing, and student services regarding the overall marketing objectives and strategies of the plan.

The strategic marketing plan, as developed, covered a two-year time span, presenting the need to review and make modifications to the plan as needed and to update the plan to direct the subsequent marketing activities of the college. On-going evaluation of the marketing plan, reviewing both the results of specific strategies and the overall impact of the effort, was widely recommended in the literature.

Conclusions

The strategic marketing plan that was developed based on the identified criteria should serve as a comprehensive marketing direction for FVTC, providing a systematic approach to achieving its marketing objectives. The marketing plan, developed with the input of professionals beyond the college's marketing staff, beyond the staff of the college, and beyond the field of education, should result in a more credible product than had it been developed more exclusively.

By involving the instructional leaders in the plan development process, the alignment of the overall marketing plan objectives with the college's instructional programming priorities should be established. There should also be some sense of ownership created for this plan by the various divisions and leaders involved in the process as a result of their involvement and input.

Finally, the plan should provide an effective framework for the on-going evaluative measure of the various marketing objectives, strategies, and tactics. Each of the plan components have evaluation measures identified, as well as timelines and the identification of staff responsible for carrying out specific tactics.

Implications

Implementing the strategic marketing plan will enable FVTC to work toward meeting its overall marketing objectives and potentially increase enrollment and serve more students in the targeted areas identified. The plan document will serve as an internal communication tool regarding the institution's marketing direction for faculty, support staff, managers, administration, and the board of trustees. With the successful implementation of the plan's strategies and tactics, the opportunity to enhance FVTC's image in the community also exists.

The plan will also align the marketing direction with the college's instructional programming priorities, ensuring support for and commitment to the plan by the instructional services divisions. The alignment within the "marketing cycle" between market research, products, marketing communications, sales or personal contacts, and evaluation (with the student at the center) will be needed to create and sustain a marketing orientation.

The effectiveness of this plan will need to be evaluated at various points throughout its implementation and modifications or adjustments made as needed. The plan has an accountability design that involves evaluation measures of specific

tactics as well as overall strategies. At key points, the overall impact of the marketing plan will also need to be evaluated.

Finally, this strategic marketing plan could serve as a developmental process model, as well as a product model, for other post-secondary educational institutions. Such a marketing plan framework could be quite beneficial to a number of organizations, if the literature is accurate in expressing the critical need for colleges to embrace a marketing orientation in a more competitive environment.

Recommendations

It was recommended that the FVTC Strategic Marketing Plan for 1996-98 be implemented as developed and presented under separate cover. The detailed set of strategies, tactics, timelines, and staff responsibilities as outlined in the plan should be followed.

It was recommended that the vice president of marketing and economic development distribute the strategic marketing plan to all staff directly involved in its implementation, the division deans, the executive cabinet, and the board of trustees by September, 1996. It was further recommended that the strategic marketing plan be made available to all staff of the college by communicating its availability and providing copies upon request. This communication to all staff should also be done by the vice president of marketing and economic development in September, 1996.

It was recommended that the vice president of marketing and economic development establish a review process to assess the progress made on the implementation of the strategic marketing plan. The manager of marketing and public relations should be assigned the responsibility for the oversight of the plan's implementation making quarterly reports on the tactics and their evaluative results to the vice president of marketing and economic development.

It was recommended that additional research be considered in conducting an evaluation of the strategic marketing plan. Research in this area is needed to determine if the strategies of the plan produced results relative to the marketing objectives of the institution, as well as what aspects of the plan were effective for both the internal and external constituencies.

It was recommended that the results of any evaluative research conducted on the effectiveness of the strategic marketing plan be used in the development process of the subsequent marketing plan for the institution. This next planning cycle and development process would be conducted in the spring of 1998.

Finally, it was recommended that elements of this literature review, plan development process, and/or the strategic marketing plan product could be shared by the developer or other staff involved in this project with the professional community. This dissemination of information could occur through local or national conference presentations, submission to the ERIC Reproduction Service, or making these products available to individuals upon request.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Review of Other Institutional Marketing Plans

The following institutional marketing plans were reviewed as part of this development practicum.

College Wide Marketing Plan
Cuyahoga Community College (Cleveland, Ohio)
May, 1990

Marketing, Public Relations, and Institutional Advancement
Milwaukee Area Technical College (Milwaukee, Wisconsin)
June, 1995

Marketing Plan 1994-95
Sinclair Community College (Dayton, Ohio)

Marketing Plan 1993-94
Western Wisconsin Technical College (LaCrosse, Wisconsin)

Appendix B

Strategic Marketing Plan Criteria

The following criteria were established for the strategic marketing plan.

1. The plan must be based on, and consistent with, the organization's mission and strategic directions.

2. The plan must have some basis in market research and institutional data.

3. The plan must include the following key components: situation analysis, identification of target markets, marketing goals/objectives, marketing strategies, and an evaluation component.

4. The plan must serve as an internal communication tool that is clearly written and establishes a marketing philosophy and direction for the institution.

5. The plan must provide a comprehensive picture of the marketing strategies, as well as on-going marketing activities, in support of the marketing goals/objectives identified.

6. The plan must reflect on-going organizational planning efforts of the college.

Appendix C

List of Validators

The following individuals reviewed and provided input into the strategic marketing plan criteria.

Content Validity

Ms. Karen Laws	Manager, Marketing and Public Relations Fox Valley Technical College
Ms. Carol Mishler	Director, Planning, Research, and Development Fox Valley Technical College
Dr. H. Victor Baldi	President Fox Valley Technical College
Ms. June Frederickson	Director, Marketing Services Northcentral Technical College Wausau, Wisconsin

Face Validity

Mr. Dave Wuestenberg	Economic Development Training Representative Fox Valley Technical College
Ms. Karen Kramer	Public Information Specialist Fox Valley Technical College
Mr. Brian Bidwell	School Relations Specialist Fox Valley Technical College
Mr. Gary Gawinski	Marketing Videographer/Editor Fox Valley Technical College
Mr. Kevin Vosters	Marketing Representative Fox Valley Technical College
Ms. Rebecca Johnson	Marketing Assistant Fox Valley Technical College

Appendix D

Formative Committee

Members of the formative committee were selected based on their responsibilities in the organization or their experience in certain aspects of institutional marketing. The following individuals served as formative committee members in the development of the strategic marketing plan.

Ms. Karen Laws	Manager, Marketing and Public Relations Fox Valley Technical College
Ms. Carol Mishler	Director, Planning, Research, and Development Fox Valley Technical College
Ms. Kathy Ristow	Team Leader, Marketing Production Services Fox Valley Technical College
Ms. Beverly Hilscher	Economic Development Manager/ Training Representative Fox Valley Technical College
Ms. Mary Guyette	Team Leader, Student Recruitment Fox Valley Technical College
Dr. Michael Schlies	Associate Dean, Student Services Fox Valley Technical College
Ms. Donna Elliott	Dean, Service Occupations Fox Valley Technical College
Mr. James Pierce	Dean, Business and Marketing Fox Valley Technical College
Mr. Virgil Noordyk	Dean, Technical Division Fox Valley Technical College
Ms. Lori Weyers	Dean, General Studies Fox Valley Technical College

Appendix E

Strategic Marketing Plan Development Framework

The following development framework for the marketing plan was established and implemented by the formative committee.

Content Outline	Lead Person Responsible	Develop With	Completion Date
INTRODUCTION - College mission - Purposes - Strategic directions - Environmental scan information - 1996-97 college planning objectives w/ impact on marketing plan	S. May	C. Mishler	2/29/96
SITUATION ANALYSIS - Enrollment analysis by purpose - Environmental scan - Key market research information - Other institutional data	C. Mishler	Formative Committee J. Wolf	3/31/96
TARGET MARKETS OF THE COLLEGE - Overall target markets - Grid of markets w/ "products"	S. May	Formative Committee	3/31/96
MARKETING GOALS/OBJECTIVES - Need situation analysis - With appropriate detail	S. May	Deans C. Mishler K. Laws B. Hilscher M. Schlies Facilitator	4/30/96
MARKETING STRATEGIES - With appropriate detail - Evaluation component with each - Consider all district locations	S. May	Formative Committee C. Zimmerman Regional Managers	5/31/96
MAINTENANCE/ON-GOING MARKETING ACTIVITIES - Comprehensive picture - Determine components	K. Laws	K. Ristow M. Guyette B. Hilscher	4/30/96

Appendix F

Summative Committee Review Form

Fox Valley Technical College
1996-98 Strategic Marketing Plan

Please review the enclosed draft of FVTC's 1996-98 Strategic Marketing Plan and determine whether or not it meets the following criteria:

Criteria	Sufficiently Meets Criteria? (check one)	Comments/Suggestions
1. The plan is based on, and consistent with, the organization's mission and strategic directions.	❑ Yes ❑ No	
2. The plan has some basis in market research and institutional data.	❑ Yes ❑ No	
3. The plan includes the following key components: • Situation analysis • Identification of target markets • Marketing goals/objectives • Marketing strategies • An evaluation component	 ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Yes ❑ No	
4. The plan, to be used as an internal communication tool, is clearly written and establishes a marketing philosophy and direction for the institution.	❑ Yes ❑ No	
5. The plan provides a comprehensive picture of the marketing strategies, as well as on-going marketing activities, in support of the marketing goals/objectives identified.	❑ Yes ❑ No	
6. The plan reflects on-going organizational planning efforts of the college.	❑ Yes ❑ No	
7. Evaluative comments on the marketing plan **content**:		
8. Evaluative comments on the marketing plan **presentation/format**:		

Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

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Appendix G

Summative Committee

The following individuals served as the summative committee for the purpose of reviewing the draft of the strategic marketing plan against the established criteria for the plan.

Ms. Karen Laws	Manager, Marketing and Public Relations Fox Valley Technical College Appleton, Wisconsin
Ms. Carol Mishler	Director, Planning, Research, and Development Fox Valley Technical College Appleton, Wisconsin
Dr. H. Victor Baldi	President Fox Valley Technical College Appleton, Wisconsin
Ms. June Frederickson	Director, Marketing Services Northcentral Technical College Wausau, Wisconsin
Mr. Dennis Nitschke	Vice President, College Relations and Marketing Moraine Park Technical College Fond du Lac, Wisconsin
Mr. Gregg Bosak	Community Information Administrator Blackhawk Technical College Janesville, Wisconsin
Mr. Mark Mongin	Account Services Supervisor Directions, Inc. Neenah, Wisconsin